

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : ADSO

FROM : COMMO

SUBJECT: Surveillance Devices; Lack of Provisions for

DATE: 1 August 1949

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Reference: (a) Air Pouch [redacted]
(b) SES Memo to EXO, dated 28 July 1949

1. In making an analysis to determine why the opportunity described in reference (a) was missed, a certain amount of background must be set forth.

2. In the basic charter for CIA, the fact that a communications organization would be established is set down. However, the existence of an engineering laboratory and its functions is not dealt with. It is probable that the existence of a laboratory and its responsibilities and functions is not well known nor understood throughout the Agency. The engineering group has accepted, at the direction of the communications chief, the tacit responsibility for solving all problems for OSO in particular, and CIA in general, which are described as "Electrical," but are more properly "Electronic." These problems range from the development and planning of base radio installations through various kinds of communications devices to and including recorders and other electronic aids to be used in surveillance work. This responsibility, to repeat, has heretofore been tacit and not at the direction of any other responsible officer, and has been in the field of development and manufacture. The operational responsibility has been more confused. Into this picture come Inspection and Security in the continental U. S. and SES or other offices when foreign opportunities present themselves. Heretofore, it has been SES and the foreign branch desk together who weighed the requirements, and then called in the Communications Division liaison when technical equipment of an electronic nature was required.

3. Most of the models, suggestions, and test demonstrations thus far offered for desk and foreign office personnel have been arranged to show the "thinking" and "possibilities" which might be realized if it were feasible to describe the situation or to move a man well versed in the techniques of electronic surveillance when an occasion arose to use such aids; further, to inform the lab staff when a need suggests itself to the foreign staff; finally, to caution potential users as to security risk in the use of such equipments, and to warn them that others might try such equipments against our staffs.

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4. In the past no reliable means has been arrived at by which the degree of priority applicable to these special aids can be determined as against the basic communications responsibilities when a conflict of requirement exists. No special staff has been assigned to control surveillance matters, and ready movement of personnel from the U. S. to care for such needs does not appear practical due to travel arrangement problems.

5. The purchase of the particular item which appeared suitable for the subject problem was authorized and procurement begun in late 1948. (Note security hazard paragraph 7.) It is not unusual to find that from suggestion to the manufactured article, a period of from one to two years may elapse when commercial manufacturing facilities are involved.

6. In reviewing the file on this specific case, it appears that Communications was not immediately informed when the situation arose. We were not informed in sufficient time that our own technical representative was on the scene.

7. It was ignorance of these last facts which led to the cable referred to in reference (a) as to the suitability of the

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8. The Communications Division might have been able to deal with the problem by making a "crash project" manufacture of another lab unit in anticipation of delivery of the manufactured project. However, this was at a time when Engineering was besieged with contract procurement work.

9. In order to guard against repetition of such occurrences, the following recommendations are submitted for action as follows:

(a) Define the exact responsibilities of the Communications Division in electronic surveillance, both developmental and operational.

(b) Establish a relative priority of equipments in each instance when two or more projects occur.

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(c) All desks inform Communications promptly and completely, both home office and overseas area offices, when such situations develop.

(d) Within the Communications Division a specific staff be developed to service the requirements for technical support both in the United States and abroad; this staff to be of sufficient size to permit rapid dispatch of a surveillance specialist overseas on short notice.

(e) The Communications budget to include adequate funds to service the entire agency with these electronic devices from stock and travel funds to be available for the rapid movement of personnel as required.

(f) An official directive promulgated that branch chiefs have the responsibility for re-routing all cables to Commo which deal with surveillance problems or other matters which involve Communications support.

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